



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Update on Spring Prescribed Burns at Grand Canyon

Grand Canyon, AZ. -- Grand Canyon National Park has completed two of three South Rim prescribed fires planned for this spring. Firefighters completed ignition of the 222 acre Picnic Prescribed Fire on Wednesday, May 13, and the 319 acre Quarry Prescribed Fire on Friday, May 15, 2009. Some fire activity and smoke may be present within the interior of the burn unit for several weeks, as logs and other heavy fuels continue to smolder. Firefighters will continue to patrol the area until the fires are completely out.

Ponderosa pine ecosystems have experienced lightning-caused fires for thousands of years. Burn scars indicate that fires occurred frequently in the Southwest, removing duff and litter from the forest floor. The absence of fire for nearly a century has caused unhealthy forest conditions, setting the stage for larger and more severe wildland fires. These management ignited prescribed fires have played an important role in reducing fuel accumulations such as pine needles, fallen branches, and shrubs while releasing soil nutrients, increasing habitat diversity, and creating a more sustainable ecosystem.

One additional burn, the Moqui Prescribed Fire is planned on the South Rim this spring. Fire ignition will only occur when environmental factors such as wind, temperature, and relative humidity are favorable. If the Moqui burn is initiated, fire managers plan to burn only the northern half of the unit, which includes approximately 240 acres. This would keep fire activity at least one half mile north of the South Entrance Station.

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The entire Moqui burn unit is 743 acres in size and starts at the south boundary of Grand Canyon National Park in the immediate vicinity of the South Entrance Station. It then runs north along the west side of Hwy 64 for approximately 2 miles. The Moqui burn unit is bordered on the west by the Kaibab National Forest boundary and on the north by the Quarry burn unit. This burn unit contains ponderosa pine and pinyon/juniper stands as well as grass and brush. The Moqui unit last burned in 1996.

For information on plans for South Rim prescribed fires, please call 928-638-7958. To learn more about fire management in Grand Canyon National Park, visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm.

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